

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EB-11 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00

RSC-01 EUR-25 OPIC-12 DRC-01 XMB-07 TRSE-00 AID-20

CIEP-03 DOTE-00 L-03 /105 W

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R 2731030Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5785

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 1220

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, GB

SUBJ: TRANSGABON RAILROAD -- LOCOMOTIVES

REF: A) STATE 211528; B) LIBREVILLE 1193

1. BECAUSE OF GE REQUEST PARA 2, REF A, WE HAVE NOT APPROACHED GOG REGARDING INFO SOUGHT PARA 3. HOWEVER, OCTRA ASST. LEMETEYER TOLD AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN SEPT 26 THAT CONTRACT WILL BE SPLIT BETWEEN FRENCH AND GE. SAME INFORMATION CONFIRMED BY LOCAL FRENCH JOURNALIST WITH GOOD CONNECTIONS AT PRESIDENCY. THIS JOURNALIST STATED THAT ONE HALF OF FINANCING FOR FRENCH LOCOMOTIVES IS GRANT, AND ONE HALF LOAN AT BETWEEN 6 AND ONE-HALF AND 7 AND ONE-HALF PERCENT.

2. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD SOME QUESTION RE TRANSCONTINENTAL SERVICES COMPETENCE AND CAPABILITIES, WE BELIEVE THAT ITS PROBLEM WITH JAMES BROWN CONCEPT IS COMPLETELY SEPARATE FROM GE AND SHOULD RESULT IN NO HARM TO GE PROSPECTS.

3. COMMENT: THOUGH EMBASSY CERTAINLY AGREES IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE COULD GE WIN ENTIRE LOCOMOTIVES CONTRACT -- BOTH FOR REASONS OF OPERATING EFFICIENCY AND STRAIGHT MONETARY GAIN TO U.S. FIRM -- THIS IS PROBABLY NOT A VERY REALISTIC EXPECTATION. FRENCH INFLUENCE IN GABON AND PARTICULARLY WITHIN TRANSGABON RAILROAD IS SIMPLY TOO STRONG AND FRENCH FINANCING TERMS ARE TOO ATTRACTIVE.

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FOR THESE REASONS ALSO WE BELIEVE ANY "PROTEST" BY GE, UNLESS

COUCHED IN POLITE FORM OF TECHNICAL COUNSEL, WOULD PROBABLY BE
RESENTED AND ULTIMATELY DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD.
MCKESSON

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LIBREV01220
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D740275-0864
From: LIBREVILLE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740984/aaaahqir.tel
Line Count: 68
Locator: TEXT ON MICROFILM, TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION COME
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) STATE 211528; B) LIBREVILLE 1193
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 AUG 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <04 MAR 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 971128
Subject: TRANSGABON RAILROAD -- LOCOMOTIVES
TAGS: BEXP, GB
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005